

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-21 are pending in the instant application. Claims 22-24 were previously cancelled.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejections.

**35 U.S.C. 102 Rejection**

Claims 1-7, 9-15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), as anticipated by Raulerson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,551,281).

Claims 1-7, 9-15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), as anticipated by Orr et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,263,938).

Raulerson and Orr are drawn to very similar subject matter. Raulerson is entitled "Guidewire Advancer and Assembly and Method for Advancing a Guide Wire" and discloses a guide wire 21 disposed in a storage tube 68 terminating in a guide wire advancer 10. The advancer 10 is used to feed the guide wire 21 through tip 22 and into the lumen 36 of introducer needle 30. Orr is entitled "Guidewire Introducer Assembly" and discloses a guide wire 14 disposed in a storage tube 12 terminating in a guide wire advancer 16. The advancer 16 is used to feed guide wire 14 through ferrule 44 and into cannula 54.

The apparatus of Raulerson and Orr are used for precisely the same purpose, i.e. placement of a guide wire into the vasculature of a patient. Such a guide wire is then used to guide a catheter into place, the guide wire being threaded through the lumen of

the catheter and the catheter being passed over the guide wire (“over the wire catheter insertion”).

Neither Raulerson nor Orr discloses any structure for a catheter. This is because the novel apparatus of Raulerson and Orr are never used with a catheter. Only after the apparatus disclosed in Raulerson and Orr are utilized and discarded is a catheter disposed over the placed guide wire.

More specific to the disclosure of Raulerson and the currently pending claims, the Examiner points to the “catheter (10)” of Raulerson. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this characterization. Structure 10 of Raulerson is a “guide wire advancer” and comprises a “central portion 18” having two semi-circular frame type members between a “proximal portion 16” and a “distal portion 14”. Col. 4, lines 63-65. Guide wire advancer 10 has absolutely nothing in common with the catheter disclosed and claimed in the present invention, i.e. Raulerson’s guide wire advancer 10 is not a “hollow flexible tube” having a “stiffening portion” and sized to fit into the bore 36 of introducer needle 30. Raulerson discloses a guide wire storage tube 68 which is not a catheter; tube 68 does not have a stiffening section nor is said storage tube 68 sized to fit into the lumen 36 of introducer needle 30 of Raulerson, as required by the currently pending claims. The Examiner points to element 51 as embodying a “stiffening section” of the catheter 10. Applicant respectfully disagrees. 51 is disclosed in Raulerson as “an inner end surface” of the guide wire advancer 10. Col. 7, lines 26-29. No particular function is ever given this inner end surface 51 by Raulerson and stiffening a catheter or even the guide wire advancer 10 is not disclosed by Raulerson.

More specific to the disclosure of Orr and the its relationship to the currently pending claims, the Examiner points to the “catheter (16)” of Orr. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this characterization. Structure 16 of Orr is a “guide wire introducer” and comprises an “intermediate portion 18” having two semi-circular frame type members between a “rear end portion 22” and a “front end portion 26”. Col. 3, lines 9-19. Orr’s guide wire advancer 16 has nothing in common with the catheter disclosed and claimed in the present invention, i.e. guide wire advancer 16 is not a “hollow flexible tube” having a “stiffening portion” and is not sized to fit into the cannula 54 bore. Orr discloses a guide wire storage tube 12, which is not a catheter. Orr does not disclose a stiffening section of the storage tube 12 or that said storage tube 12 is sized to fit into the cannula 54 bore of Orr, as required by the currently pending claims. The Examiner points to element 68 of Orr as embodying a “stiffening section” of the “catheter 16”. Applicant respectfully disagrees. 68 is disclosed in Orr as “sheath” for gripping the guide wire 14 through the guide wire advancer 10. Col. 5, lines 23-37. Sheath 68 of Orr is in no way associated with a catheter or the guidewire advancer 16 disclosed by Orr. Nor is sheath 68 alleged to stiffening any element of Orr.

Neither of the references cited as anticipating currently pending claims 1-7, 9-15, 17 and 18 disclose a catheter, a stiffening portion of the catheter or the catheter sized to be received in a needle bore, as required by each and every one of the pending claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

#### 35 U.S.C. 103 Rejections

Claims 8, 16 and 19-21 have been rejected as unpatentable over Raulerson or Orr.

Neither Raulerson nor Orr disclose, as detailed above, a catheter, a stiffening portion of the catheter or the catheter sized to be received in a needle bore, as required by each and every one of claims 8, 16 and 19-21. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

This Amendment is in response to an Office Action dated June 13, 2007. Thus, it is believed that this Amendment is being timely filed. In addition, it is believed that no fee is necessary in connection with the filing of this Amendment. If any fee is required to maintain the pendency of the subject application, authorization is hereby given to charge the amount of any such fee to Deposit Account No. 01-1785.

Respectfully submitted

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